COMMON SENSE VERSUS HOMŒOPATHY

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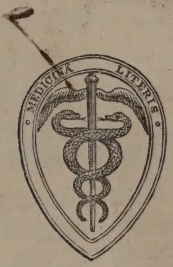
COMMON SENSE

VERSUS

HOMŒOPATHY.

By SAMUEL KNAGGS,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, LONDON;
LICENTIATE OF THE APOTHECARIES' COMPANY;
AUTHOR OF "THE PLEA OF INSANITY IN CRIMINAL CASES."



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PREFACE.

In conversing with non-medical friends on the subject of Homœopathy, I have often been surprised to observe how very imperfectly informed they have been in the principles and doctrines of the system. Whether as enthusiastic supporters or bitterest opponents of the system, in by far the greater number of instances, the reasons they advance for their belief are utterly inadequate to justify the views they entertain. There are those, I am aware, who think it best to leave quackery alone,—that discussion only tends to give it more extensive circulation. My own opinion is, that quackery, in all its forms, would be less frequent if the public mind was more fully alive to its artifices and deceits. In the formation of this popular sketch of one of the most gigantic follies of the day, I am greatly indebted to the excellent and elaborate works of Drs. Simpson, Bushnan, Wood, Routh, and Hooker, which have most thoroughly exhausted the subject on its scientific merits. This pamphlet does not profess to offer any new light to the eyes of my professional brethren, but simply to epitomize the information they possess, for the use of those who have the disposition to glean the truth, but who, from their want of medical knowledge,

require it to be presented in a medium more condensed and popular. It originated in detached letters, some time since published for local use, and which, at that period, were subjected to able criticism from the pen of a homœopathic practitioner. I feel under obligations to this criticism, because it has afforded me an excellent opportunity of reviewing my language, opinions, and argument: wherever the argument has seemed to me defective, I have profited by the reconsideration, and have either modified or withdrawn it. At the request of some medical friends I have been induced to re-arrange these letters in pamphlet form, and if they prove useful to the public mind, the labour bestowed upon them will not be thrown away.

COMMON SENSE

versus

HOMŒOPATHY.

Diseases are problems which have engaged the attention, and enlisted the sympathizing investigation of philosophers in all ages. In the early stages of civilization, the mind, only very imperfectly tutored, having but few fixed recorded data to rest upon, and accustomed to rely for its information mainly upon observation, was, as may be imagined, very liable to be misled. A similar result, obtaining in a few instances, the sequence is held sufficient to establish it a fact, and thus *false* with *real* facts were garnered up, and truth mingled with error became current. With the progress of knowledge and civilization the human mind becomes dissatisfied with scrutiny so superficial and inconclusive; but, in its anxiety to remedy what was before amiss, is prone to fall into error from the opposite extreme. Especially has this been the case with the practice of medicine: false *facts* in the early dawn were the errors which retarded its advancement; whilst in its rise and meridian, false *theories* have been its greatest bane. The highest aim of the practitioner of medicine should be to establish sound theory on well-proven facts; but nothing is more conducive to the injury of science than hasty generalization from

limited observation. It is this that lies at the root of all the heresies that spring both from within and without the pale of the profession, and the tendency to which influences so injuriously the judgment and practice of otherwise judicious and excellent men. The desire to reduce the practice of medicine to the level of an exact science is the main cause of these hasty generalizations and false theories. The intelligent and candid practitioner of medicine does not find uniform results in all instances, and therefore vaunts neither himself nor his practice; but the unscrupulous, the empiric, or the ignorant, either do not see, or will not acknowledge ill success; they all have some *perfect* system of curing; they promise much; their successful cases are ostentatiously paraded; their dupes are too much ashamed of their folly to spread the tale. If their reasons will not bear investigation, they always appeal to their *experience*, and there are never wanting plenty of recoveries to testify to the excellences of the system. In business, the supply is regulated by the demand, and in medicine the same rule is in operation. We all like certainty, and in illness it is natural that a system should be preferred which professes perfection and power to cure all disease, to one which is openly admitted to be imperfect. And thus it is that empirics have ever held the field against the legitimate practitioner, and oftentimes with greater success; because human beings are always on the watch for some ideal standard of perfection, some infallible, never-erring guide, to which they might look for release from doubt and uncertainty. Amongst the systems which have sprung up of late years, in direct opposition to all known principles of medicine, is that of Homœopathy; and it is the object of this pamphlet to present a fair and unbiassed analysis, in a condensed and popular form,

of the doctrines, logic, and tendencies of this system. The subject is one of great importance, in which every member of society is directly interested. The difference between Homœopathy and rational medicine is as great as that between sunlight and darkness; and the lives of some of our dearest friends (perhaps our own) may depend upon our decision on the merits of the two. The founder of Homœopathy, Samuel Hahnemann, was a regularly educated physician, born at Meissen, in Saxony, in 1755, studied medicine at Leipsic and Vienna, and took his degree from Erlangen. He was evidently a man of considerable tact and ability. In his early career he had to struggle with poverty, but in time his talents and peculiarities gained him wide celebrity. His works show him to have been egregiously vain, unscrupulous in assertion, and reckless in conclusion: a good type of a small class—shrewd, ingenious, and speculative; possessing genius which might, with judicious culture, have produced splendid results, but, warped to wrong, has thrown out a web of sophistry for future generations to disentangle. It is very far from my wish to rest any part of the argument on the *merits* of the system upon the imperfections or vices of its founder, and therefore I omit all allusion to personal actions which one cannot approve, and confine my remarks in this necessary preliminary sketch to his *mental* peculiarities,—and these *only* because they better enable us to appreciate the reasons of the rise and spreading of this remarkable delusion. Nor is it my intention to string together all the wild theories promulgated by Hahnemann, with reference to the origin, progress, and treatment of disease, as representing *fairly* the opinions of the present practitioners of Homœopathy. For instance, Hahnemann tells us that nearly two-thirds of all diseases (including mental

disorders) are dependent upon internal itch; and again, that all substances are soluble in alcohol. These assertions are extravagant, absurd, and untrue,—and we might readily prove them to be so; but Hahnemann's writings abound with such vagaries; and though there are still, doubtless, some enthusiasts to speak a word in defence of all his fanciful and untenable dogmas, the better informed and influential portion of the homœopathic school does not subscribe to all these speculative opinions of Hahnemann. The object of this pamphlet is to examine into the principles of the homœopathy of to-day, and not into those of the founder of the system, and therefore I shall strictly confine myself to that foundation on which both master and disciple erect the superstructure. The three theories of the homœopath, and those only which I shall discuss, are at the present time maintained by homœopathic writers and authorities as stanchly as by Hahnemann himself, and are the ground on which the system rests. They embrace three considerations:—

1st. The *mode* in which the disease is to be treated.

2ndly. The *law* by which the remedy is to be chosen.

3rdly. The *dose* in which the medicine is to be administered.

1st. *The mode in which the disease is to be treated!* Hahnemann tells us (*Org.* p. 27) that—

"In the ordinary school of medicine, the efforts made by nature for the relief of the organism, in diseases where no medicine was given, were regarded as models of treatment worthy of imitation. *But this was a great error.*"

And at p. 30, he appeals to the "reflective reason and unfettered judgment" of the physician, not to follow blindly the promptings of nature. It is quite true that, prior to the time of Hahnemann, medical practice had been to a considerable extent guided by the obser-

vation of the efforts made by nature to repair the damages of disease; and the general principles of practice were founded, as indeed they now are, on the hints thrown out by nature. Disregarding, therefore, nature as his guide, and relying upon his own "reflective reason and unfettered judgment," Hahnemann informs us that all previous observations on the pathology of disease were incorrect; that by the *symptoms* alone can we judge of, and treat, the disease; and that we need not inquire into or trouble about its *cause*.

Org. p. 74.—"The *symptoms* are the means by which the disease demands the medicine requisite for its relief; whilst, on the other hand, every internal cause assigned to it *is nothing but an empty dream*."

And again, p. 112—

"What else will the old school search for in the hidden interior of the organism, as a *prima causa morbi*, whilst they reject as an object of cure, and proudly despise, the sensible and manifest representation of the disease,—the symptoms that so plainly address themselves to us? What else do they wish to cure in disease but these?"

Now, the "old school," as it is termed, does not and never did "proudly despise the symptoms of disease:" it conceives disease to be a compound of the outward sign and inward cause; and the idea upon which it has acted is, that if a total be composed of two parts, A and B, the person who acquires a knowledge of A and B must have a better knowledge of the total than the individual who confines his studies to A or B separately. Take, for example, the ingenious mechanism of the clock or watch. Suppose irregularity in the movements of the hands over the dial-plate: which would be most reasonable—to search into the interior of the machinery and set to rights the faulty spring or wheel, or to direct attention alone to the incongruous manifestations on the outward face?

This method of treating the *symptoms* of disease is

not only that upon which Hahnemann founded his practice, but is also the plan upon which modern homœopathic practice is taught in the text-books of homœopathic authorities. The great Laennec has a few remarks bearing forcibly on this error. "I think," he observes, "that the study of the anatomical varieties of disease is the only basis of positive knowledge in medicine, of which we can never lose sight without pursuing *chimeras,* and creating phantoms for attack. But I also think that it is equally dangerous to bestow on the *local changes* an attention so exclusive as to cause us to lose sight of the *difference of the causes* on which they depend, or if possible on their known or hidden essence. This short-sighted way of regarding disease leads us often to confound the effect with its cause, and, to fall into the grave error of regarding and treating as identical, diseases in which the only alterations visible are lesions anatomically similar."

To illustrate the foolishness of adapting remedial agents to certain symptoms of disease, rather than to the causes which produce those symptoms, let us picture to ourselves some prominent and common symptom in sickness.—Headache. Here we have three persons, all suffering from intense pain in the head, with different degrees of feverishness, but still the marked symptom in each case is the headache. In these cases each individual has a different disease; the headache in the first is that known as brow ague, depending probably on malarious influence, and requiring the free employment of quinine; in the second, we have a case of anæmia, or poverty of the blood, calling for nutritious diet and chalybeate medicines; whilst, in the third, we find inflammation of the brain developing itself, and requiring active, and the very opposite to tonic, treatment. Now I know that I can relieve the

headache in the first case by quinine, and that in the second by iron, but were I to employ either of these remedies in the third instance, it would greatly prejudice the chance of recovery; because, although the sign is similar, the condition of body on which it depends is diametrically opposite.

My wish is to show that any system of medicine taking no higher ground than the treatment of the *symptoms* of disease rests on an unscientific foundation, and by inference, that this is so with homœopathy.

2ndly. *The law by which the remedy is to be chosen.* The next step of the reflective reason and unfettered judgment, is the announcement of the discovery of a universal law, *similia similibus curantur*, which is thus defined by Hahnemann, p. 126. *Org.*

"Each individual case of disease is most certainly, radically, rapidly, and permanently annihilated and destroyed, only by a medicine capable of exciting in a healthy person symptoms similar to, but stronger than, those produced by the disease."

The universality of this law is one of the fundamental doctrines of the homœopathist: "We believe in the universality of the therapeutic law, *similia similibus curantur*," writes Dr. Joslin. Again, says Mr. Sharpe, "It is the principle, the law, *similia similibus curantur*, which constitutes homœopathy, in whatever dose the medicines may be given." In plain terms, the doctrine of "like cures like" is this,—that a medicine will cure in the sick those symptoms which it is capable of producing in the healthy. That there is a certain amount of truth in this, all medical men admit: tartar emetic excites vomiting, and in some instances, in small doses, is very efficient in checking vomiting. Castor oil is a purgative, but, nevertheless, is a remedy of value in some forms of diarrhœa; and these facts, with others of a like nature, were known and acted on by physicians long before Hahnemann and his universal law were ever heard of.

In no science, perhaps, has so much false logic been displayed as in that of medicine; and thus it is that the history of medicine records so many varying schools of practice: at one time all diseases are regarded as blood diseases, at another as nervous; with one party they all originate in the stomach, with another in the liver; at one period we find a system curing by contraries, —*contraria contrariis*, &c.: what wonder, then, that in our day a *similia similibus* system should exist? All these different theories are based upon some truth: some diseases are immediately connected with the circulatory, others with the nervous system; some originate in the stomach, and others in a torpid liver; some may be cured on the doctrine of contraries, and others on that of *similia similibus*.

The fallacy lies not in the assertion that such conditions do prevail, nor that diseases may be cured by one system or the other—indeed, this is all granted;—but in the universal application of each theory. The argument is, that medicines selected in accordance with the doctrine "like cures like" will cure disease, *ergo*, disease can *only* be cured by medicines so administered, —an inference which the premises do not warrant. The same applies equally to all *systems* of medicine, which hug themselves in the possession of laws of universal applicability: they claim more than they can prove their claim to, and by so doing excite an opposition to, or at least a suspicion of, even the elements of truth they embody. Practically, I do not see the objection to the law of "like cures like" being acted upon by the homœopathic practitioner, because, although it is a very one-sided way of regarding disease, still, by the great varieties of symptoms which medicines will produce, according to the homœopathic statements, and the numerous symptoms apparent in all cases of

disease, sufficient latitude would be allowed for the selection of those remedies which the experience of lengthened observation had shown to be necessary: in other words, that the medical man might indulge his hobby, and give whatever medicament he thought proper. As a matter of science, the law of "like cures like," considered in the light of an universal law, will not bear scrutiny; it has opposed to it the experience of all the other hasty generalizing laws in medicine, which testify at least to this fact,—that diseases will succumb under every system, be the means employed never so opposite. And our own observation will show us, if imagination is not permitted to enslave the judgment, that medicines are effective in curing disease, though they have no power, in proper doses, of producing in the healthy person symptoms resembling the disease. Thus bark is of singular value in the treatment of ague, sulphur is a specific for itch, and lemon juice cures scurvy; but neither of these remedies will produce in the healthy person symptoms in any way resembling either ague, itch, or scurvy.

Now when Hahnemann commenced experimenting with his new law, he soon discovered that the medicines so chosen sometimes produced a positive increase of the disease, and even death: the mind clings with eagerness to its own productions, and so it was with the parent and his pet law. It was plain that something must be done; either the law must be given up, or another element must be introduced into the system; and hence the doctrine of infinitesimal or *imaginary* quantities, which brings us to the third consideration.

3rdly. *The dose in which medicines are to be administered!* According to Hahnemann,

"The best dose of the properly selected remedy is always the very smallest one, in one of the high dynamizations (X.), as well for chronic as for acute diseases."—*Org.* p. 289.

As the reader may possibly be curious to know what these high dynamizations are, I will now endeavour to explain.

"One grain of a solid is taken—nutmeg or charcoal, for instance—powdered first, and rubbed up with 99 grains of sugar of milk; this constitutes the first dynamization. To obtain the second, mix one grain of the first dynamization with 99 grains of sugar of milk. The third is procured by mixing one grain of the second with another 99 grains; and in this way the process is repeated to the thirtieth attenuation. In the case of a liquid, the following plan is adopted: two drops of a fresh vegetable juice, mixed with equal parts of alcohol, are diluted with 98 drops of alcohol, and potentized by means of two succussions, whereby the first development of power is formed; and this process is repeated through 29 more phials, each of which is filled three quarters full, with 99 drops of alcohol, and each succeeding phial is to be provided with one drop from the preceding phial (which has already been shaken twice), and is, in its turn, shaken, and in the same manner, at last, the thirtieth development of power (potentized decillionth dilution X.), which is the one most generally used."

The following Table shows the strength of the different attenuations, with the signs employed to distinguish them :—

Signs.	Strength of One Grain.
1. First attenuation . .	One hundredth of a grain, or drop
2. Second	One Ten-thousandth ,,
I. Third	One Millionth ,,
II. Sixth	One Billionth ,,
III. Ninth	One Trillionth ,,
IV. Twelfth	One Quadrillionth ,,
V. Fifteenth	One Quintillionth ,,
VI. Eighteenth	One Sextillionth ,,
VII. Twenty-first . . .	One Septillionth ,,
VIII. Twenty-fourth . .	One Octillionth ,,
IX. Twenty-seventh . .	One Nonillionth ,,
X. Thirtieth	One Decillionth ,,

The formula for preparing liquids is taken from p. 315, *Org.*, and is essentially the same as that in the *Homœopathic Pharmacopœia*, compiled by Dr. C. T. Hempel. The potentizing process alluded to is thus explained in p. 330, *Org.*

"When the drop of a medicinal fluid has been shaken up once with 100 drops of spirit of wine, there certainly ensues a thorough mixture of the whole; but with two, three, ten, or more such

shakes, the mixture becomes much more intimate—that is to say, the medicinal power becomes more unfolded, developed, and rendered much more penetrating in its action on the nerves."

And in p. 325, referring to the same subject, he states that he has been

"Compelled, by *convincing experience*, to reduce the ten shakings formerly directed to be given after each attenuation to two."

Such is the marvellous potency obtained by this mode of preparation, that Hahnemann informs us that

"The medicinal vapour emanating from a globule (of which twenty or a hundred weigh a grain) impregnated with a medicinal fluid in the high development of power, and inhaled, is the way in which homœopathic remedies act most surely and most powerfully. The homœopathic physician allows the patient to hold the open mouth of a phial, containing the little dry globule, first to one nostril; then, in the act of inspiration, the air is to be inhaled; and if it is wished to give a stronger dose, it is applied in the same manner to the other nostril. This globule retains all its power undiminished for at least eighteen or twenty years, even if the phial be opened a thousand times during that period, if it be but protected from the heat and sun's light."—p. 33.

At the present time, however, it must in fairness be admitted, that with reference to this Hahnemannic doctrine of the potentization of medicinal substances, there is a division in the homœopathic camp; one party contending for the infinitesimal dose and the increased potency of the remedy in proportion to the extremity of its subdivision, and the other side for the infinitesimal dose alone.

Thus, in lectures delivered before the New York Homœopathic Society, in 1851, Dr. Joslin says: "Hahnemann has taught us how to cure the most violent disease in a man, by a dose that would not injure a mouse: the power of a medicine is exalted by a *peculiar mode* of preparation;" and in another place, "that doses of Hahnemann's attenuated medicines possess inconceivably more power than equal quantities of crude substances, is demonstrable by experience."

Whilst, opposed to this, we find the statement of another leader, Dr. Henderson, that "Minute doses must be contented to pass for no more than they are—just minute doses, with their own proper contingent of medicinal force, and nothing beyond that. The idea of dynamization by friction and shaking is a mere hypothesis, of no consequence whatever to the theory or practice of homœopathy, and has no *kind* or measure of likelihood in its favour, as most *homœopathists* believe." This division of opinion creates some difficulty; but, as Dr. Henderson admits that "*many* homœopathists hold that the minuter the dose the greater is the power of the medicine," and as Dr. Joslin considers "that it is the destiny of homœopathy, not only to effect a glorious revolution in the art of healing, but to lead to new views of the *constitution of matter*," it may be well to quote the following pertinent observations from Dr. Bushnan: "If extremely minute doses of substances had the power which Hahnemann attributes to them, of producing striking effects on the healthy body, it would be impossible for man to live in a state of society. If this theory were correct, sanitary reforms, instead of being a blessing, would be a curse; for, in diluting noxious miasmata, we should only render them more able to penetrate into the inmost recesses of the human organism. If this theory were correct, how could man breathe atmospheric air, and live? Every mouthful of air we breathe contains an homœopathic dose of carbonic acid gas, which, moreover, has been Hahnemannically shaken by winds and storms in a sufficient degree. The morbid symptoms of carbonic acid gas, when administered in certain doses, are well known; they are headache, confusion of ideas, heaviness, sense of oppression about the chest, sleepiness, stupor, and other accidents, which soon terminate in

death. Now, atmospheric air contains this substance not in a thirtieth, nor in a tenth, nor yet in a second dilution, but about one part in two thousand four hundred; the dose of this substance is repeated twenty times in every minute of our lives, and in the very manner in which Hahnemann's *experience* led him to conclude his remedies acted 'most surely and most powerfully;' and had not the beneficent Creator instituted an eternal and invariable law (contrary to the homœopathic one), that the sensible *properties* of substances *diminish* with the *quantities* of matter, man would have been poisoned off the face of the earth within a few hours of his creation." But though homœopathic authorities do not *all* yield their assent to the absurd doctrine of Hahnemann, that the power of substances is increased proportionately to the shakings they receive and the dilution they are subject to, yet they all agree in adopting as *their creed* the administration of medicines in the minute attenuations of Hahnemann. Even Dr. Henderson, the only man of scientific reputation who has joined himself to homœopathy in this country, gravely records the effects resulting from the exhibition of the thirtieth attenuation of sepia, half a drop of the third attenuation of nux vomica, and the sixth dilution of soluble mercury; and has devoted a considerable portion of his work On Homœopathy, to prove that there is no difference in principle between the small dose of poisonous substances occasionally employed by the physician as a remedy in disease, and the imaginary attenuations of the homœopath; that (in his own words) "doses of the hundredth of a grain are as inconceivable, as remedies, as doses of the millionth and decillionth of a grain."

It is easy to talk of the trillionth and decillionth of a grain, and the medicinal properties of one or two

drops of such a dilution: but I think few persons are aware of the immensity of this division. Soon after the promulgation of Hahnemann's doctrines it was suggested, that if the decillionth of a grain have any efficacy, an ounce of Epsom salts thrown into the Lake of Geneva would be sufficient to physic all the Calvinists of Switzerland; but later and careful systematic calculations have shown that this is stopping very far short of the truth: the 10th solution, as M. Cap has shown in the *Journal de Pharmacie* for 1845, would require a body of water 500 times greater than the bulk of the Lake of Geneva, or a sea somewhat larger than the Gulf of Venice; to make the 11th solution, a quantity of water greater than the Mediterranean would be necessary; the 12th solution could scarcely be accomplished in an ocean 500 fathoms deep, and covering the whole earth; while the 30th, or decillionth solution of fifteen grains of a homœopathic medicine, would require a layer of water of 1300 yards in depth, and extending over a space equal to the whole area of the solar system. Professor Simpson, of Edinburgh, speaking on this subject, says, that had our common parent Adam, when first called into existence, commenced swallowing a billionth of a grain of sulphur every second (sixth attenuation), and had he continued swallowing, night and day, at the same rate, up to the present time, he would only, as yet, have completed a small part of his task: it would require him to work and swallow at the same rate for 24,000 years yet to come, in order to finish one single grain of this drug! When the 30th dilution is practised, each grain is divided into 100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 parts. But occasionally greater dilution than this is required; for Mr. Brodribb, one of the examiners of the Apothecaries' Company, was in-

formed by an homœopathic chemist in the West End of London, that he kept the forty-thousandth dilution of arsenic, which would be represented by prefixing the figure 1 to eighty thousand ciphers. To expect any result from substances so diluted appears marvellous, more especially when told, as we are, by Dr. Black, "That a healthy man may devour the contents of a whole pocket-case of homœopathic medicines, without feeling the least alteration," though this indeed has long been our own opinion. It is singular and noteworthy, that the great founder Hahnemann's *experience* of the remedial powers of medicines was derived from the observation of the symptoms they produced in health; and he tells us, that "no benefit can result from studying the effects of remedies upon the sick;" whereas his disciple, Dr. Black, informs us, that "the homœopaths become acquainted with medicines by trials on the sick." The misfortune is, that both these parties speak from *experience:* there is manifest discrepancy in the two statements, sufficient indeed to point a caution against too implicit confidence in the results of experience; but the balance of testimony, in the writings of homœopathic authorities, is in favour of testing the action of remedies by the symptoms they produce in the healthy. It is found by homœopathists that medicines in infinitesimal dilution produce most extraordinary effects on the healthy frame, and substances, the innocent action of which in the simple mass is familiar to all, in a state of infinite division, are endowed with miraculous powers. Thus, on referring to Jahr's "Manual of Homœopathic Medicine," we find, 1st, Cayenne Pepper, which produces in homœopathists 142 different symptoms—"pains, with stiffness in the joints, cramps in the body, disposition to be frightened, strong disposition to take everything in bad part, to fly into a

rage, want of reflection, and awkwardness, loss of memory, cough after taking coffee, dysentery, pain in the roots of the hair after scratching," &c.; 2ndly, "Nutmeg produces great painful sensibility of the whole body, agitation of the muscular system, a constant flow of facetious ideas, with a strong disposition to make a fool of everything and everybody, roughness and cough, idiotcy and madness, malignant fever," &c.; 3rdly, "Common Salt produces squinting, irascibility, and desire to laugh, excessive forgetfulness, palsies, typhoid fever, melancholy, sadness, with abundant weeping, weakness of memory," &c. &c., — the dose of this last is two globules, each containing the decillionth of a grain, and its action is found to continue forty or fifty days after the dose is swallowed. Common Charcoal was discovered by Hahnemann, if given in the decillionth of a grain, to produce no less than 930 distinct symptoms. It seems almost incredible that such palpable absurdities as these should be written by any one not entirely demented: yet the work of Jahr is published by the Hahnemann Publishing Society, and is considered one of the standard works on the homœopathic *materia medica.* One might imagine that homœopathic experimenters were always under the influence of infinitesimal doses of nutmeg, or some similar medicament, from the singular "flow of facetious ideas" which are said to result from the provings of their medicinal substances. Thus we are told by Dr. Dudgeon, in the *Pathogenetic Encyclopædia,* that sulphur produces the delusion that he possesses fine clothes; copper, that he has old chairs to mend and greens for sale; mercury, an inclination to pull people's noses; and conium that he is a goose, &c. &c. Folly such as this is published by a society established by the leading homœopathic practitioners of Great Britain,

for the sake of supplying scientific and practical works on Homœopathy.

To call such trashy maudlin experiment scientific investigation, marks the little claim such parties have to the title of men of science, and stamps them at once as weak-minded enthusiasts or wilful deceivers. Now, before concluding the consideration of the infinitesimal dose, I would make an observation. Medicines vary greatly in power and activity, and their beneficial operation depends upon whether they are administered in unison with the requirements of the diseased condition or not. Some medicines are, even in small quantities, active poisons; such, for instance, as arsenic, tartar emetic, &c.; but in medicinal, that is, minuter proportions, are invaluable in the treatment of some diseases. One or two grains of arsenic would suffice to destroy life, and therefore I can see nothing surprising in the fact, that so small a quantity as the 100th or 200th of a grain, repeated three times a day for a period of many weeks, should exert a direct influence upon the animal economy; but, that quantities of the most potent poisons so minute as the billionth or decillionth of a grain should produce any result, excepting through the medium of the imagination, is too preposterous and absurd for belief. In the end, however, the question resolves itself into one of *fact:* we think it highly improbable that these homœopathic doses can influence the system either for good or bad; but the point is, not can they, but do they? And here the homœopath steps forward, gladly leaving his theories to those who have a taste for barren speculations, and proudly appeals to experience to prove that his practice is successful, however untenable may be the dogmas upon which it is founded. The physician, the homœopath, and the common quack, alike appeal to *experience* as the testimony to their success;

and the statistics of each are said to constitute the experience. Statistics are collections of *facts*, the truth of which is deposed to by the party collecting them, who is therefore in the position of a witness. "In every case where we receive," writes Abercrombie, "facts upon testimony, we are much influenced by their accordance with facts with which we are already acquainted. This is what in common language we call their probability; and statements which are probable, that is, in accordance with facts which we already know, are received upon a lower degree of evidence than those which are not in such accordance, or which, in other words, appear to us in the present state of our knowledge to be improbable." Homœopathic facts are not in accordance with facts which we already know, therefore we have a right to demand the highest proofs which the nature of evidence admits of, before we accept them as true.

In testing the statistical returns of the cures of disease, there are many points to be taken into consideration, which would scarcely be understood by the non-medical public, but which, nevertheless, are of the greatest importance in instituting comparisons between them. Allowances must be made for differences of locality, the type of the disease, the influence of the mind. Care must be taken that coincidences be not confounded with causes, and that the effects of strict hygienic discipline be duly estimated.

These are general causes which occasion a very decided difference in the rate of mortality, but which receive no consideration at the hands of the homœopath —recoveries under whose treatment are all the result of globulism. Taking the published homœopathic statistics, we at once admit that the rate of mortality is lower than in the published statistics of medical practice. But when we examine into the causes contributing to

produce this low rate of mortality, the surprise is rather that the mortality should be so large as it is admitted to be. M. Touchon, in his work "On Homœopathy," states the mortality to range from $3\frac{1}{4}$ to $5\frac{1}{3}$ per cent.; but we find that he omits to include those cases admitted into the hospital in a dying state; taking these into account, we raise it to 4·9 and 9·7 per cent.; so that by rectifying this error alone, they approach very near to the average of hospital returns, viz., from 7 to 10 per cent.

This exclusion is never practised in medical returns, and therefore if the object is comparison between the two, it is very unfair. In this individual instance a great change is effected in the figures, and we know that during the prevalence of a virulent epidemic the number of these cases would vastly increase, and make a still greater alteration in the returns. The second objection is to the selection of cases. That these are of a very different character to those found in ordinary hospitals, is evident from their own statements. Thus we find recorded that in Fleischmann's Hospital in 1835—43, were 79 cases of headache, hoarseness 6, indigestion 172, colds 43. Again, in the Leipsic Hospital, 1842—3, we find 23 cases of simple toothache admitted out of 418 cases. It is quite credible that, with such admissions, there should be a low rate of mortality, and one might readily anticipate in the sequel a handsome addition to the number of cures. Dr. Routh himself, when visiting the Vienna homœopathic hospital, saw a boy admitted with simple headache; on the next day he was well, though he had neither seen a physician, nor been prescribed for. On his visit next day, the physician could not pass him over; a globule was ordered, and a *cure* perfected.

Speaking from his own observation, Dr. Routh says, "I can honestly affirm that the serious cases are few

and far between; the milder cases, on the contrary, are of frequent occurrence." We should be inclined to suspect that this was so (independently of the direct testimony to the fact borne by Dr. Routh and other gentlemen, who have visited the homœopathic hospitals in this country and abroad, for the sake of forming a correct estimate of the merits of homœopathic practice), from the greater number of patients admitted during the year into their hospitals, proportionally to their number of beds. Compare the London Hospital with the homœopathic hospitals of London and Vienna:—

		Admissions.			Mortality.
	London Hospt.	1849 ... 4090 ...	1 bed to	10...	7·2 pr ct.
Homœ.	Leipsic do.	1849 ... 973 ...	1 bed to	121...	0·6 „
Homœ.	Vienna do.	1845 ... 1116 ...	1 bed to	22...	5·5 „

As further indirect evidence of the selection of cases, we may instance consumption, an admitted incurable disease. In the hospitals of ordinary medical practice, the number of consumptive cases is in the proportion of 4 to 9 per cent. of all diseases; whilst in the homœopathic hospitals we find it at 1·5 and 1·6 per cent.; and indeed, as will be shown hereafter from *their own figures*, the amount of incurable disease admitted into their Vienna Hospital is not 2 per cent., whereas in our Dumfries Hospital, in which the rate of mortality is identical, it is about 17 per cent. These facts speak volumes, and we are not surprised to find Dr. Balfour, who carefully watched the homœopathic practice at Vienna, reporting "that the secret of their seeming success lies in the fact of the admissions and dismissions being entirely uncontrolled, and there being no check on the diagnosis. Indeed, to say the least, it requires a man to be very conscientious to decide impartially where a case is cured or only convalescent, and to admit none but the worst cases, more especially when the maintenance of the hospital depends on the

returns of mortality attaining a cipher which shall be considered favourable by the government."

The *third objection* is founded on the difference of the class of patients which come under homœopathic hospital treatment. "From personal observation," says Dr. Routh, "I can state that the patients in Dr. Fleischmann's hospital, are the better class of working mechanics and manufacturers; those in the *allopathic* hospital at Vienna are oftentimes the most miserable objects living." This statement is confirmed by the testimony of Drs. Gardiner, Glück, and others, who have attended the practice of homœopathic hospitals. This will exercise a most important influence upon the rate of mortality; for the extreme poor, debilitated by excesses, privation, and exposure, are the more obnoxious to severe disease, and the less able to resist its ravages when once it has set in. To prove this true, we have only to compare the mortality of the sick of our hospitals with that of those of our workhouses; that of the former varying from 6 to 11 per cent., that of the latter from 11 to 27 per cent.

The *fourth objection* is, that the diseases are not properly distinguished by the homœopathic practitioners, and we take their own figures to substantiate this assertion. In order to show the success of homœopathy in the treatment of acute disease, they have constructed tables showing the comparative results of homœopathic and medical treatment, and of course giving a very handsome balance in favour of the former: thus in pneumonia (inflammation of the lung), we have the following table given:—

	Cases.	Deaths.	Mortality.
Under homœopathic treatment	783	45	5·7 per cent., or 1 in 17.
Under medical treatment	1522	373	24·5 per cent., or 1 in 4.

If these cases are really cases of pneumonia, the table shows most triumphantly the success of the homœopathic treatment; and it behoves us therefore to inquire into and analyse the correctness of the figures. Fortunately for us we have collateral evidence, which throws a gleam of light across the scene, and enables us to appreciate these figures at their real worth. In 1848—49 there were admitted into the ordinary hospital at Vienna 51,709 cases; altogether, of these 7·5 per cent. were cases of bronchitis (a much less fatal and more common disease than pneumonia), and 2·1 per cent. of pneumonia. Apply this test of figures to the Vienna homœopathic hospital: between the years 1835—43 6551 were admitted; of these there were 59 cases of bronchitis, or 0·8 per cent., but 300 of pneumonia, or 4·5 per cent. In hospitals which have no special system to prop up, we find, as at that of Vienna, three or four cases of bronchitis to one of pneumonia, from which I think it will be apparent that the pneumonia of the homœopath and the pneumonia of the medical practitioner are two very different things, because it is actually reported to occur in the homœopathic hospital in a proportion very many times greater than experience shows to be the case elsewhere. Nor is it with regard to pneumonia alone that we detect this inconsistency; exactly the same thing occurs with several other dangerous diseases; thus peritonitis (inflammation of the bowels): comparing Fleischmann's with the general hospital, we find that the former admits 3·6 per cent. more cases per annum.

Occasionally in the private practice of homœopathists one has an opportunity of seeing the manner in which simple ailments are dignified by the appellations of the most formidable diseases. I have myself seen cases of slight remittent fever intended to have passed into

cures, as "water on the brain," and similar mistakes or deceits equally glaring or culpable. But I do not rest my convictions respecting homœopathy upon the mistakes or deceits of the private homœopathic practitioner. I take the statistics I have examined from the best managed homœopathic hospital in existence,—that of the Sisters of Charity in Vienna, opened in 1832, containing upwards of fifty beds, under the care of Dr. Fleischmann from 1835, who is said to be a man of honour and respectability, and a well-educated physician.

Dr. Gardiner, of Edinburgh, who records eight years' experience at this hospital, makes the following remarks respecting it:—"If I were to give a formula for the arrangement of an hospital, designed to exhibit a low rate of mortality, it would be this:—Choose your site well; let it not be in, but near a large city, having already hospital accommodation on a prodigious scale well known to the poorest classes of the community, and adapted to their wants; let the distance from the centre be such (say three miles) as will keep back the extremely abject and the dangerously diseased, either through want of knowledge of your institution, or want of power to reach it; let the arrangements be so perfect as to contrast favourably with the older hospitals, and to attract the valetudinarians whose illness and means permit them to avail themselves of its superior accommodation; and finally, let some special practice be pursued, in order to enlist the sympathies of the rich and idle dilettanti, who will know how to fill your wards with the sort of cases favourable for your experiment. This is precisely the case with the Vienna homœopathic hospital, which has the amazing effrontery to compare its peddling experiments with the great labours and beneficence of which general hospitals of this and other countries furnish examples: experiments of which

the means are human sufferings and dangers, and the avowed and foregone conclusion the exaltation and triumph of a sect." Dr. Gardiner proves that the cases at Fleischmann's hospital are selected to exclude such diseases as consumption, organic diseases of heart, liver, and kidneys,—in fact, those diseases which constitute the opprobrium of medicine; and he asks, "Is it not plain to the most ordinary allowance of common sense, that cases have been admitted by dozens, probably by hundreds, for no other purpose than to contribute to the success of the experiment, and swell the triumph of homœopathy? I cannot imagine to what purpose else we have 300 cases of sore throat, which are rarely, except in most special cases, admitted into our great hospitals in this country, on account of the pressure of the more severe and fatal diseases to which our doors are thrown open, whilst our experimentalists turn their backs upon them, or at least give them the cold shoulder! To be sure they are ugly subjects for *curative* experiments, these same organic diseases of heart, liver, lungs, and kidneys, &c., and whatever one may think of the honesty, no one can doubt the prudence, of giving preference to sore throats, colds, indigestion, and a host of minor ills, which will be found numerically strong in the returns."

One other quotation from Dr. G. is valuable as exposing the falsehood on the basis of which the whole system of homœopathy is erected. "I cannot resist," he says, "alluding to the proportion of *cures:* in the record of a death it is impossible to show any bias, or in any way to deviate from accuracy without gross falsehood, with correspondingly great risk of detection. But in the column of cures in an hospital may be read, as in a glass, the character of the whole of its records. The alleged *cures* in the Vienna homœopathic hospital are

92 per cent. of the whole cases, and as the deaths are 6·25 per cent., it follows that there is actually *scarcely any medium between death and cure !!*" To any one who knows what hospital cases are, or should be, this simple statement proves rather more than was intended. Compare it with the returns of any hospital which has no system to support—I choose Dumfries, simply because its mortality is identical with that of Fleischmann's hospital :—

	Cures, per cent.		Deaths, per cent.
Fleischmann's . . .	92	...	6·26
Dumfries	76·02	...	6.26

Alas for the

> "Vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself
> And falls on the other side"

of truth and probability ! In straining every nerve after this ideal and fictitious ratio of cures, Dr. F. unluckily forgot the following ugly dilemma :—"If, from the excellence of his art, or any other cause, he was enabled to cure 16 per cent. more than Dumfries, why was his skill not equally effective in reducing the mortality ?" There can be only two answers to this question, and we may give the homœopathists their choice of them : either the cases were really curable in enormous proportion, and the homœopathic art is responsible for a mortality which must be considered under these circumstances as quite appalling, or the alleged *cures* are a mockery and delusion, inconsistent with nature and fact, and cunningly dressed up for the undiscriminating wonder of the multitude.

Before leaving the statistics of homœopathy, we would ask whether these homœopathic collectors of facts are in a position to be *legally* entitled to credibility ? The homœopathic fact collector is a witness to the truth of improbable facts : has he those qualifica-

tions which constitute what is called the credibility of a witness, as the want of them in any considerable degree do his disability—viz., sufficient knowledge of the fact attested, disinterestedness, integrity, and veracity? The result of our inquiries would seem to show that if he possesses the first of these requisites, he most certainly does not exhibit the last. But if it is necessary that a witness should be disinterested, before his testimony be received on *his own showing*, then must all the homœopathic statistics fall to the ground: for there is this great difference between the medical practitioner and the homœopath,—the former only wishes to find the truth and to practise it, whilst the latter is committed to an universal law and nonsensical dose, to which everything must be made to bend. Thus if homœopathy were true, the only difference that it would make to the practitioner of rational medicine would be, that it would cost him less for his medicines, and therefore, he would be a positive gainer by the exchange; whilst if homœopathy is proved to be false, the homœopathic practitioner is deprived of his source of income, and should he venture back again to rational medicine, the knowledge of his easy credulity would tend greatly to obstruct his progress. Thus, in the case of the homœopath, there is a decided interest to protect and support; but the very reverse obtains, as regards the medical practitioner. In objecting to homœopathic returns on the score of want of integrity, we wish it to be understood, that it is of integrity in a *legal*, rather than a moral point of view, that we speak. These gentlemen, in the ordinary transactions of life, may be perfectly upright and honest, but a strange obliquity of the rational powers, rather than of the moral feelings, seems to operate in everything connected with their favourite science. This is by no

means peculiar to homœopathists, but it is an error into which all who are devoted to any one particular theory are exceedingly apt to fall. Dr. Latham enters an admirable caution against this source of error, when he recommends students to cultivate an honest and impartial mind, because, he says, it is remarkable how apt some little favourite theory is to get early possession of the student's imagination, rendering him dishonest (perhaps unconsciously) in the simple reception of facts. It is like some little favourite sin in our moral nature, which taints the whole character of the man. The merits of homœopathy, however, have been submitted fairly to the test in a few instances, by members of the profession, whose connexion with large hospitals and professional standing have given them an opportunity to do so. In private, or even in dispensary practice, cases of severe disease are either too rare in their occurrence, or the surrounding conditions are not sufficiently under the knowledge and control of the practitioner, to warrant him in deciding from data so obtained on the comparative merits of different methods of practice. Nothing can be more illogical, nothing more incorrect, than to conclude, that because a few individuals get well under a certain plan of treatment, that therefore their recovery is owing to that treatment.

The efforts of nature, unassisted by medicine, are sufficient to remove severe disease in a great number of instances, as shown by the experiments of Dietl, a German physician, who treated a large number of cases by dietetic treatment alone. Medicines judiciously administered, therefore, only remove the disease more quickly, and lessen the ratio of mortality.

So that if we find by comparison of *many cases*, that the average duration of the disease is materially shortened, and the number of deaths diminished, we are

justified in ascribing curative powers to the medicines employed in producing that result: but from a few isolated cases of even acute disease recovering under treatment, we have no right to draw other inference than as to the good fortune of the patient.

It is only in hospitals where the observation of severe disease can be carried out on an extensive scale, where the sick are under the entire supervision of the practitioner, so that all changes may be noted, all adverse or favourable contingencies marked and allowed for, that a proper estimate of the value of different modes of treatment can be formed. To this test then, in France, has homœopathy been submitted, in consequence of a petition presented to the Minister of Public Instruction in Paris, praying that an homœopathic hospital might be opened in the French metropolis. This question was referred by him to the new Academy of Medicine, which body appointed a commission, consisting of the most eminent men in the profession, to examine and inquire into the system. After a protracted investigation the following evidence was given before the Academy by these commissioners, many of them men of European reputation:—Andral was decidedly opposed to allowing the homœopathists a dispensary; humanity should not be tampered with by the experiments of these people. He had given their system a fair trial; he had treated between 130 and 140 patients homœopathically, in the presence of the homœopathists themselves. M. Guibourt had prepared the medicines, and every requisite care and precaution were duly observed, yet in not one instance was he successful. He had tried various experiments on his own person, and several other professional friends had followed his example, in order to ascertain the actual effects of the homœopathic doses, but the result was not as Hahne-

mann and his disciples described them. He had taken quinine in the prescribed globules, but had contracted no intermittent fever; he had taken aconite, but without being afflicted with symptoms of plethora; sulphur he took, to try if he could catch the itch, but he caught nothing; and so with various other substances which he and his friends took, in obedience to Hahnemannian precepts. M. Bailly had given permission to Messrs. Curie and Simon to treat patients homœopathically in his wards: they had done so for four or five months. A register was kept, and the result was, that not one of a large number of patients was cured by the Hahnemannian method. MM. Piorry, Adelon, Itard, Bouillard, Desgenettes, and others, spoke to the same effect, and the result was the unanimous adoption of a decided reply in the negative to the Minister.

Here is positive and unexceptionable evidence that the system is good for nought, where we can check the cases, and where we can trust to the medicine that has been exhibited being in the homœopathic dose. In 1829 a commission was appointed by the King of Naples to supervise a series of experiments, made and continued for about forty days in the military hospital; and here again the testimony was unfavourable to homœopathy.

As corroborative evidence that medicines will not produce the symptoms alleged by homœopathists, we may refer to some carefully-conducted experiments in the early part of the present century. Dumas, of Montpelier, entertained the idea then in vogue, that disease might be cured by setting up artificial fever. To see whether such a condition could be produced or no, many medical men volunteered their services. They took, for many months, different medicines, especially

bark, in all kinds of doses, without being able to excite the most insignificant species of fever.

A somewhat suggestive fact has been mentioned by Dr. Glover, of Newcastle, that one of the first, if not the very first, wholesale firm in London, was in the habit of supplying its customers simply with sugar of milk globules, labelling them, however, according to the different homœopathic names of drugs! This statement was made by an agent of the firm, at the house of Messrs. Gilpin and Co., druggists, Newcastle. I adduce this simply as pointing to a conclusion which I think will long since have suggested itself to the minds of my readers,—viz., that the recoveries which have taken place under the globulistic treatment are not due to any inherent power or virtue in the globule itself: that, in fact, homœopathy is a delusion, by which the patient is amused, whilst nature cures the disease. That this is the opinion of the great majority of the medical profession, will appear from the following resolutions that were passed at a meeting of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association at Brighton in 1851, including the Presidents of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons of London, and nearly 300 of the most influential members of the profession:—

1st. That it is the opinion of this association, that homœopathy, as propounded by Hahnemann and practised by his followers, is so utterly opposed to science and common sense, as well as so completely at variance with the experience of the medical profession, that it ought to be in no way or degree practised or countenanced by any regularly educated medical practitioner.

2nd. That homœopathic practitioners have endeavoured to heap contempt upon the practice of

medicine and surgery, as followed by members of this association and the profession at large.

3rd. That for these reasons it is derogatory to the honour of members of this association to hold any kind of professional intercourse with homœopathic practitioners.

4th. That there are three classes of practitioners who ought not to be members of this association: 1st, real homœopathic practitioners; 2nd, those who practise homœopathy in combination with other systems of treatment; and 3rd, those who, under various pretences, meet in consultation, or hold professional intercourse with those who practise homœopathy.

These are the resolutions of one association of medical practitioners numbering in its body upwards of 2000 members, formed to uphold honourable conduct for the joint well being of the profession and the public, and to be enabled to reprobate with the authority and moral force of a body, when strongly required to do so. In Huddersfield we have an institution similar in character to this great provincial association, though unconnected with it; and I am proud to be able to say, that from this immediate district upwards of forty medical practitioners have enrolled themselves in our Medico-Ethical Society, one of the first rules of which is, that "no member shall practise homœopathy." All the examining colleges in this country refuse their diplomas to any candidate who professes during his examination to found his practice on homœopathic principles, because they are established for the purpose of guaranteeing to the public skilful and safe practitioners; these colleges regard such practitioners as neither skilful nor safe, and refuse to betray a sacred

trust by conferring their licence on persons whom they consider as wholly unworthy their confidence. Looking upon homœopathy as a delusion, it will be well to see whether something may not be learnt from the epidemic delusions of bygone days. A fruitful source of these medical delusions is the too ready disposition to consider whatever follows a cause as being the result of that cause. One of the most accomplished men of his time, the learned and justly celebrated Bishop Berkeley, in the latter period of his life experienced much relief, in a complaint he was suffering from, by drinking tar-water: his imagination soon led him to attribute marvellous properties to this said tar-water, till at length by degrees it was discovered by him to be the cure for all diseases, and he actually published an essay on the subject, entitled "Siris; a Chain of Philosophical Reflections and Enquiries concerning the Virtues of Tar-Water." For fevers nothing could be better, for the learned Bishop actually cured in one season twenty-five of them in his own family; something like the experience of the young lady who had six attacks of cholera in one day! It is experience such as this that sheds light on some of the large statistics that are occasionally published by those who are anxious to prove a mode of practice to be pre-eminently successful. The Bishop's answer to the unbelievers in the efficacy of the tar-water was this:—"I appeal to time and experiment." Now that "time and experiment" have disposed of the tar-water nonsense, we wonder that so wise a man did not know better than to think so much of tar-water; but somehow he did not know better, and many learned men after him did not know better than to think too much of ridiculous things, even such ridiculous things as infinitesimal doses of charcoal and oyster-shell. The history of medical delusions most copiously

illustrates the truth, "That folly is far from being confined to fools."

In the early part of the present century there raged throughout the length and breadth of this and other lands, a delusion which originated from a physician at Connecticut: *time* and *experiment* have satisfactorily solved the question of the utility of "Perkins's Metallic Tractors;" but at the time of which I speak, Perkinism was more rampant than homœopathy is now. These tractors were two pieces of metal, one appearing to be steel, the other brass, and about three inches in length, and tapering to a point. Many cures took place after the employment of these instruments, and philosophers and other learned men, who witnessed the effects, attributed them to some galvanic agency. However that might be, this system did acquire a remarkable hold upon the public confidence. London opened an institution, and the titled rushed in flocks to its support; public dinners were given in honour of the great discovery; and poetry was laid under extensive contribution to sound its praises and diffuse its benefits.

> "See pointed metals, blest with power t' appease
> The ruthless rage of merciless disease,
> O'er the frail part a subtle fluid pour,
> Drenched with invisible galvanic shower,
> Till the arthritic staff and crutch forego,
> And leap exulting like the bounding roe."

The unbelievers in the days of Perkins were wicked enough to try experiments on their patients with tractors made of wood, and so painted as to resemble the five-guinea ones, and impudently pretended to produce the same effects, and five of the patients of these mischievous doctors actually returned public thanks in church for their cures. In one of these cases, the patient, Miss Ann Hill, after a little time, exclaimed, "Bless me! why, who could have thought it, that them

little things could pull the pain from one! Well to be sure! the longer one lives the more one sees; oh dear!" If Miss Ann Hill had lived in the year 1855 she would have had the pain pulled out by a globule, or mesmeric pass.

The tractor worshippers fell into the same error as the learned bishop; they forgot that the remedial power of nature is always at work removing disease, and that imagination often renders essential assistance. It is to the influence of imagination that we must attribute the good effects of the royal touch, and the manifest diminution of sickness which was found to follow the ancient practice of driving a nail into the wall of the Temple of Jupiter, by the Romans, in time of pestilence. An interesting incident related by Dr. Paris shows the effect of the mental influence on disease. When the powers of nitrous oxide gas (laughing gas) were discovered, Dr. Beddoes concluded that it must necessarily be a specific for paralysis; a patient was selected for trial, and the management of the experiment was entrusted to Sir Humphrey Davy. Previous to the administration of the gas, he inserted a small pocket thermometer under the tongue of the patient, as he was accustomed to do on such occasions, to ascertain the degree of animal temperature, with a view to future comparison. The paralytic man, wholly ignorant of the nature of the process to which he was to submit, but deeply impressed, from the representations of Dr. Beddoes with the certainty of its success, no sooner felt the thermometer under the tongue than he concluded the talisman was in full operation, and in a burst of enthusiasm, declared that he already experienced the effect of its benign influence throughout his whole body. The opportunity was too tempting to be lost: Davy cast an intelligent glance at Coleridge, and de-

sired his patient to renew his visit on the following day, when the same ceremony was performed, and repeated every succeeding day for a fortnight, the patient gradually improving during that period, when he was dismissed cured,—no other application having been used.

A wonderful cure by homœopathy is related by Dr. Simpson: a lady had been useless and bedridden for years; the spine was her own alleged seat of disease; and endless measures had been tried to restore her to health and the power of standing and walking; but all in vain. In consequence of the earnest advice and glowing representations of some female homœopathic friends, she had been long anxious to ascertain if homœopathic treatment could be of any use in her distressing case; but her husband refused to give his consent, believing homœopathy to be a "discreditable delusion and a quackery." Fortunately, however, for herself, her husband left her for a week or two on a sporting expedition: and as soon as he set off with his gun and dogs, she seized hold of the opportunity she had long desired, of consulting a celebrated homœopathic physician. The physician listened long; examined her most attentively; made before her written entries and memoranda regarding all her symptoms and sufferings; and at last, on considering the whole, confidently assured her, that doubtlessly he could send her a drug that corresponded with her disease, and which would produce such effects the first day, other effects the next, &c.: and that before her husband returned, she would be able to walk and enjoy life. The patient diligently swallowed the globules; all the premeditated effects duly followed; and when her husband returned home, he was astonished and overjoyed to find his sick and bedridden wife up and well. The crime of consulting a homœopathist

against his declared wish was readily forgiven, seeing the results of the homœopathic treatment had been so happy and beneficial; but he asked for a sight of the wonder-working "globules" that had produced so gladsome a change in his wife's health and in his own prospects of domestic happiness. On being shown the globules, the acute and loving husband earnestly desired them to be most carefully preserved and locked up, lest perchance his partner's distressing ailments should at any future time return. He then went and informed his usual family physician of this secret, that his wife had got well under a homœopathist; adding that still he did not believe in homœopathy itself, for he found the globules which she had swallowed were not homœopathic drugs, but specimens of some small percussion pellets that were sent to him for examination (his gun being one formed for the use of the percussion pellet, in preference to the percussion cap), but which had not arrived at the house till some time after he had left. The servant had mistaken the packet of pellets for the packet of homœopathic globules, and the lady had swallowed them under the belief that she was swallowing the homœopathic physician's medicine.

There are many causes which tend to keep up delusions: party influence, the persuasions of plausible and persevering individuals, the imagined infallibility of the system, the mere empire of fashion, or the pretensions of false philosophy, are prone to produce a bias in the mind; and it is singular with what attachment the mind clings to the delusion when once the bias has been formed. A gentleman who suffered from neuralgia (nervous pain) in the face, took his usual dose of globules at bedtime, the following day he was at the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park; the weather was unusually warm and moist, and the Crystal Palace exces-

sively crowded. The pain of the face was as bad as ever, yet the globules lost no part of their credit in the patient's estimation; on the contrary, as he was perspiring profusely, they acquired the additional reputation of being a powerful sudorific. Even men from whom better things might have been expected, have been led into false conclusions in an equally ridiculous manner. Dr. Simpson tells us that, early in the history of homœopathy, he witnessed the following occurrence; an old school-mate having commenced business as a homœopathic druggist in Liverpool, kindly sent Dr. S. a present of a small box of homœopathic medicines:—and a very beautifully painted box it was. During the time it was in Dr. Simpson's possession, he put it only to one use, viz., he gave it as an occasional plaything to his eldest son, who was then a child. The boy used in his sport to uncork the small bottles, empty the globules into a heap, and then refill the bottles from the general mass; of course this had speedily the effect of altering and disarranging the contents of the entire Lilliputian drug shop: the globules pertaining to the different bottles were more or less thoroughly mixed together; and sometimes, when the child was tired of this occupation, others at last refilled the bottles from the general heap. A professional brother happening to call at Dr. Simpson's house one day, when the doctor was absent from home, saw the box, and put it in his pocket. Many weeks after, the new proprietor of the box met Dr. Simpson, and told him that he had been trying to practise homœopathically, and he added that he had seen some wonderful effects and cures from using the drugs contained in the doctor's own former homœopathic box! Wrongly, perhaps, as Dr. S. now thinks, he did not tell this physician at the time, that the globules of the bottles which he had been using

were elaborately commixed; but the whole struck him as so good a joke at the moment, that he thought he would reserve it, to bring out against his friend on some future and more rife occasion, for the purpose of laughing him out of his homœopathic delusion. But unfortunately matters hastened rapidly on, the physician became more and more a homœopath, and then it became too serious a matter to joke about, when he actually published a list of supposed homœopathic cures: the physician alluded to was Dr. Henderson!

From the foregoing observations I think several important lessons may be learnt:

1st. That the apparent success of a delusion, as evidenced by the support of the titled, wealthy, and learned, is no guarantee or proof of its truth,—witness Perkinism, table-turning, clairvoyance, homœopathy!

2nd. It is important to remember that the *sequences* of the taking of medicinal substances, are by no means always the *consequences* of their exhibition, — witness Dr. Henderson's box of globules, metallic tractors, homœopathy!

3rd. That imagination is able to render important service in the treatment and cure of disease; and that the action of some remedies is only explicable by the influence they exert upon the imagination, —witness Davy's thermometer, nail in Jupiter's Temple, homœopathy!

4th. Let us guard against being deceived by the jugglery of figures, and remember, that no comparison can be drawn between diseases which are different in their essential nature, though called by the same names,—witness Bishop Berkeley's fevers, the young lady's cholera, and homœopathic statistics!

5th. We may learn to distrust our own judgment on subjects of which we are only partially informed, perhaps entirely ignorant; and in the exercise of a wise discretion determine to take the advice of those of acknowledged ability, who have devoted their lives and their talents to the study of those subjects, and who, at the same time, have no personal interest in repressing the truth.

6th. We must expect to find error in *systems* which have peculiar doctrines to support, because bias makes the mind unfair in the reception of fact, and in reflection upon it.

My aim has been to show that homœopathy is nothing more than leaving the disease to nature, and acting upon the imagination of the patient: that by this, and careful hygienic discipline, much can be done, there is no doubt; and if the homœopath would honestly admit that this is all he does, he would find all medical practitioners ready to agree with him; and though they might not approve the neglect of the many known certainties of medicine, they would be willing to acknowledge the candour and honesty of the experiment, and would also be glad of the opportunity afforded them of witnessing the reparative powers of nature, when unaided by medicinal treatment. But when he professes and practises a species of jugglery, as the infinitesimal nonsense most assuredly is, he must not be surprised that medical men hold aloof and will not sanction, or countenance in the least degree, what they conceive to be downright imposition. All my arguments have been directed against the system of homœopathy. I know full well that there are many who, under the mask of homœopathy, practise the very principles they profess to deride: of such men I do not speak; their own practice conveys their own condemnation.

The public is aware that the great majority of the profession is decidedly opposed to homœopathy, but the private judgment of a considerable section of this public is as decidedly favourable to it. The habit of exercising the private judgment on points understood is apt to beget, in many minds, a confidence they have no right to feel, and thus opinions are expressed upon the most abstruse and knotty questions, often the more positive, in proportion to the individual's complete ignorance of the subject.

There is no reason why one person should not be as well able as another to form a judgment on a medical question, provided that his medical education has been as good, and that his reasoning powers are as great. We should all hesitate to venture an opinion opposed to that of a clever mechanic, on any device connected with his art; and yet had we undergone the same training as this mechanic, we should have been as well, if not perhaps better qualified to speak. How frequently do we hear the conviction of the utility or truth of a system, be it homœopathy or any other pathy, expressed in the most positive and enthusiastic terms, and coming from the lips of otherwise intelligent people, but who know as much about medical matters as the man in the moon. From whence do they derive such conviction? From the observation of a few isolated or apparent facts; and from this they authoritatively pronounce. But these good ladies and gentlemen would do well to consider that before a correct opinion can be formed of the nature and treatment of the simplest disease, they must make themselves acquainted familiarly with a few of those sciences which constitute merely the groundworks of the practice of medicine—such as anatomy, physiology and pathology, for example,—so as in some degree to appreciate the various structures which compose the

body, the functions which each structure has to perform, and the morbid changes which belong to each. Thus armed, they may with propriety venture to devote a few years to the study of disease at the bedside; and when by pursuing a regular and step-by-step process of investigation, they have prepared their minds to encounter the *fallacies* of observation, then their opinions on the complex phenomena of medical science may be worthy some little consideration. I do not write to flatter, but to speak plain truths. Retrospection displays the errors into which our parents fell, the delusions they believed in, and the follies they encouraged; and now we see another generation treading in the selfsame steps, fluttering towards these scientific cobwebs, unheeding the examples of the past.

To say that society is more enlightened, and more highly educated than it was twenty or thirty years ago, has little to do with the question; this is admitted—but the fundamental errors which lie at the root of every delusion are as rife now as they ever were, and when homœopathy has passed away, as it undoubtedly will before the grindstone of "*time and experiment,*" there will not be wanting some other fond conceit to supply its place. Novelty is the cry both yesterday, to-day, and will doubtless be to-morrow; its originality attracts, its specious promises allure: but in the hour of extreme peril he must be bold indeed, who determines to nail his colours to the mast, and trust to the efficacy of these short-lived whimsies. When grievously alarmed, the pathy fancier flies hastily for rescue to those old-fashioned measures which have stood the test of *time* and *experiment,* but alas! as is too frequently the case, the precious moment when active measures might have availed, has been frittered away in pretentious but do-nothing treatment, and life falls a sacrifice at the shrine

of extravagant and hollow-hearted quackery. The uncertainty of medicine, and the differences of physicians, are favourite topics with the supporters of all fashionable quackeries, but it should be borne in mind that medicine has accumulated a vast mass of facts and principles, which entitle it to a high stand as a science; that, notwithstanding all the difficulties which embarrass the investigation, its certainties even in the application of remedies are great in amount. Dr. Forbes, who has been I think much misquoted by the advocates of homœopathy, from his able article in the *British and Foreign Review* on this subject, tells us, that in judicious hands "practical medicine is rarely productive of evil if it fails to benefit, and often benefits in the highest degree," but that homœopathy must be considered as "false and bad—useless to the sufferer, and degrading to the physician." I believe this to be a fair statement of the comparative merits of the two: medicine is a two-edged sword, valuable for defence if used with judgment, but capable of doing much injury if wielded by the careless, presumptuous, or ill-informed. I would sooner be left to my own unaided powers of nature to repair the mischiefs of disease, than be treated injudiciously by medicine; but would consider sound medical treatment as that most to be desired: hence the necessity for discrimination in the choice of a medical attendant, to ensure prudence, knowledge, and energy in the direction of the treatment. Far be it from me to advocate the claims of any *system* of medicine: the real treasures of science consist not in the pomp and parade of systems, but in permanent and universally acknowledged truths.

The first object of the physician is the benefit of his patient, and therefore he strives to enlist in his service every means that has been proved available in the treat-

ment of disease. With this end in view, he selects from the many special schemes of practice whatever of truth they may seem to embody, and applies the hints thus gained to the further improvement of the science of medicine. Thus, from homœopathy he learns to estimate highly the advantage of attention to strict dietetic rules, and amusement of mind; from hydropathy, the different ways in which a simple element may be made to produce most powerful effects upon the human body, either for good or evil; and from mesmerism the influence of fixed attention upon the nervous system. He who refuses to make use of these influences because they are mingled with quackeries, betrays his bigotry, but not his sense, and shames the noble calling which claims from him the truth wherever he may find it. He gives countenance to the mass of rubbish by rejecting the few grains of truth therein embodied, and loses the respect of the observant by the too evident blindness of his zeal. It is the *use* of all the varied influences which operate upon the organism of the body, whether hygienic, medicinal, physical, mental, or moral, which constitutes the rational practice of medicine; the *abuse* of any one or all of them, is quackery. Indiscriminate and excessive medication, therefore, is as much quackery as Parr's Life Pills, or doses infinitesimal; perhaps more reprehensible, because less open quackery. I advocate the rational use of medicine: and would suggest that the public has it always in its power to guard against unprincipled medication by removing the interest to do so from hands that may be, and perhaps are, sometimes unscrupulous.

Let the principle be recognised by the public, that medical men are remunerated for their time and services, and not for the quantities of physic sent, and all dread of such malpractices must cease.

My aim has been to convince by reason, and inferentially to expose the bad logic by which such pseudo systems are founded and supported. These so-called sciences hold precisely the same relationship to medicine that Mormonism or Mahometanism do to Christianity; and yet they are encouraged and maintained by many highly intelligent and excellent men. The non-professional public are peculiarly sensitive to any interference with their right of private judgment, especially in all that refers to medical matters; and yet there is not one single department of science on which the public are worse informed than in matters connected with medicine: they are entirely ignorant of the solid foundation upon which medicine rests,—and so it is, that the experience which has resulted from the accumulated observation and research of centuries, is rejected for the sake of a novelty, founded on principles which no one can understand, and discountenanced by all to whose judgment on such points a grain's weight should attach. One of our highest authorities on the application of the physical sciences to medicine, the illustrious Liebig, gives the opinion, in which I entirely accord, that "homœopathy treats truth with scorn, and bids defiance to common sense."

THE END.